

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2750

To direct the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Secretary of the Interior to participate constructively in the implementation of the Las Vegas Wash Wetland Restoration and Lake Mead Water Quality Improvement Project, Nevada.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 19, 2000

Mr. REID introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works

A BILL

To direct the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Secretary of the Interior to participate constructively in the implementation of the Las Vegas Wash Wetland Restoration and Lake Mead Water Quality Improvement Project, Nevada.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Las Vegas Wash Wet-
5 land Restoration and Lake Mead Water Quality Improve-
6 ment Act of 2000”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.**

2 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

3 (1) the Las Vegas Wash is a significant eco-
4 system of desert wetland created by treated effluent
5 return flows, urban runoff, and flood events from
6 the Las Vegas Valley;

7 (2) a healthy wetland ecosystem in the Las
8 Vegas Wash would improve water quality in the Las
9 Vegas Bay, the Lake Mead National Recreation
10 Area, and the lower Colorado River, which is critical
11 habitat for endangered and threatened fish and wild-
12 life populations;

13 (3) the Secretary of the Interior delivers munic-
14 ipal, industrial, and agricultural water from the Col-
15 orado River to millions of people in Nevada, Arizona,
16 and California;

17 (4) a significant concern relating to water qual-
18 ity in Lake Mead is the transmission of contami-
19 nants to the Colorado River through the Las Vegas
20 Wash from shallow ground water seepage originating
21 at an industrial complex located in the southeast
22 part of the Las Vegas Valley, Nevada;

23 (5) the industrial complex was constructed by
24 the Federal Government during World War II to
25 manufacture products required by the Department
26 of Defense, including perchlorate, which is an essen-

1 tial component of rocket fuel used exclusively by the
2 Federal Government;

3 (6) over the past 20 years the Las Vegas Wash
4 wetland has been significantly eroded and deterio-
5 rated by flash floods, increasing treated effluent
6 flows, urban runoff, and polluted shallow ground
7 water seepage;

8 (7) the loss of the Las Vegas Wash wetland is
9 having an adverse impact on wildlife habitat;

10 (8) the Las Vegas Wash wetland offers a
11 unique opportunity to experience a wetland environ-
12 ment providing educational, cultural, environmental,
13 and recreation benefits to the community of south-
14 ern Nevada;

15 (9) as recommended by a citizens' water quality
16 advisory committee in 1998, the Las Vegas Wash
17 Coordination Committee, including Federal, State,
18 and local agencies, was formed to establish a com-
19 prehensive adaptive management plan for the Las
20 Vegas Wash wetland;

21 (10) from 1998 to 1999, the Committee en-
22 gaged in an extensive public process to evaluate the
23 multifaceted challenges associated with the restora-
24 tion of the Las Vegas Wash wetland;

1 (11) in October 1999, the Committee completed
2 and initiated public comment on a comprehensive
3 adaptive management plan;

4 (12) in January 2000, the adaptive manage-
5 ment plan was approved by the Board of the South-
6 ern Nevada Water Authority, which is the coordi-
7 nating agency for the Committee; and

8 (13) the adaptive management plan calls for a
9 partnership among Federal, State, and local agen-
10 cies with an interest in the Las Vegas Wash wet-
11 land.

12 (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are—

13 (1) to recognize the importance of the restora-
14 tion of the Las Vegas Wash wetland to water quality
15 in the Colorado River and a desert wetland eco-
16 system;

17 (2) to direct the affected Federal agencies to
18 participate constructively in the implementation of
19 the Las Vegas Wash Wetland Restoration and Lake
20 Mead Water Quality Improvement Project under the
21 comprehensive adaptive management plan; and

22 (3) to authorize such sums as are necessary for
23 the affected Federal agencies to carry out specific
24 tasks required by the Project in partnership with the

1 authority and other State and local agencies involved
2 in the Committee.

3 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

4 In this Act:

5 (1) **AUTHORITY.**—The term “Authority” means
6 the Southern Nevada Water Authority, organized
7 under the law of the State of Nevada.

8 (2) **COMMITTEE.**—The term “Committee”
9 means the 28-member Las Vegas Wash Coordina-
10 tion Committee, including representatives of—

11 (A) the United States Fish and Wildlife
12 Service;

13 (B) the Army Corps of Engineers;

14 (C) the Environmental Protection Agency;

15 (D) the National Park Service;

16 (E) the Bureau of Reclamation;

17 (F) the Natural Resources Conservation
18 Service;

19 (G) the Southern Nevada Water Authority;

20 (H) the Nevada Division of Environmental
21 Protection, Clark County, Nevada (including
22 the Clark County Department of Parks and
23 Recreation);

24 (I) the Clark County Sanitation District;

1 (J) the cities of Las Vegas, North Las
 2 Vegas, and Henderson, Nevada;

3 (K) the Clark County Regional Flood Con-
 4 trol District;

5 (L) other Federal, State, and local agen-
 6 cies;

7 (M) environmental groups; and

8 (N) private citizens.

9 (3) PROJECT.—

10 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “Project”
 11 means the Las Vegas Wash Wetlands Restora-
 12 tion and Lake Mead Water Quality Improve-
 13 ment Project.

14 (B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “Project” in-
 15 cludes the programs, features, components,
 16 projects, and activities identified in the Com-
 17 prehensive Adaptive Management Plan for the
 18 Las Vegas Wash developed by the Committee
 19 and dated January 20, 2000.

20 **SEC. 4. PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT.**

21 (a) IN GENERAL.—In addition to the authorities
 22 under other Federal law, the Administrator of the Envi-
 23 ronmental Protection Agency, the Secretary of the Army,
 24 the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Secretary of the In-

terior may participate in the continued development and implementation of the Project.

(b) FEDERAL ASSISTANCE.—The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Secretary of the Army, and the Secretary of the Interior shall provide such research, technical assistance, interagency coordination, and funding for—

(1) the collection and modeling of scientific and hydrologic data; and

(2) the design and construction of—

(A) erosion control facilities;

(B) wetland restoration features;

(C) ground water interdiction facilities;

(D) treated effluent transport diffusion and reuse features;

(E) water quality improvement facilities;

and

(F) other project features developed under the Las Vegas Wash Comprehensive Adaptive Management Plan.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this Act.

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